

PRESS RELEASE

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CONYERS INTRODUCES CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PERMIT FOREIGN BORN CITIZENS TO SEEK THE PRESIDENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement regarding today's introduction of a proposed Amendment to the Constitution providing that Foreign-Born Citizens of 20 Years are Eligible for the Office of President:

"No citizen should be denied the opportunity to seek the nation's highest office. The amendment that I have introduced today will allow foreign-born individuals who have been citizens of this country for at least 20 years to be eligible for this office.

As you know, Article II of the Constitution of the United States provides that only natural-born citizens are entitled to hold the Office of President. I believe that this limitation contradicts the principles for which this country stands. This nation prides itself on its diversity of culture, experience, and opinion. This quality is achieved only by welcoming immigrants to this country, allowing them to become citizens, and enabling them make full contributions to society.

For the most part, the United States treats its citizens, those natural-born and foreign-born, the same. However, when determining who is eligible for the Offices of President, this country unfairly distinguishes between the two. Allowing the United States to be a better country because of the contributions that foreign-born citizens make, and then not allowing them to fully participate in all aspects of society, is un-American.

As you may also know, some of our country's foreign-born citizens are our country's greatest public servants. There are also 700 foreign-born citizens who have received the Medal of Honor. It is unjust to deny citizens that have risked their lives for this country the chance to become President of the United States as well. A 2002 Pentagon study reports that more than 30,000 foreign-born citizens are currently serving in the U.S. military.

I realize that constitutional amendments are rare and that those proposed should be subject to great scrutiny. I truly respect one of the documents on which our country was founded, the Constitution of the United States. Therefore, it is after great consideration and with the utmost gravity, that I introduce this amendment today. I am hopeful that my fellow colleagues in Congress will properly consider the proposed amendment and realize that every citizen of the United States should be entitled to dream of becoming President."

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